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schmerz, Realism and a New Faith in Life, Pessimism, the New Optimism—a development parallel, one might add, to what has occurred in other literatures. Language creates an artificial bar. The influence of Hebbel is still to be felt in its proper intensity on our own literature and perhaps that wave has swept by. He is here awarded fuller recognition than some critics think he merits, but he is a very great poet in spite of their dislike, and the present writer, without troubling about his philosophy, had long ago found enjoyment in his sombre yet powerful dramas. Platen, too, an old favorite, receives place in the Lyric Canon; few German poets drew a more direct inspiration from the Greeks and fewer still have been so successful in the adaptation of classical metres to the German language. Nietzsche's debt to Hebbel is sufficiently indicated, but from darkness he draws a lurid light; his *Uebermensch* finds a curious and imperfect parallel in Thomas Hardy's *The God Beyond*. But it must be admitted that these philosophies are often pursued with more enthusiasm than understanding, and that to the poets philosophy plunges all too readily into mysticism. Professor Bruns has drawn a path, however, that can be followed and his interpretations of the writers of lyric constitute a genuine service to criticism.

J. B. EDWARDS.

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PLATO'S STUDIES AND CRITICISMS OF THE POETS. By Carleton Lewis Brownson. Boston: The Gorham Press. 1920. Pp. 157.

When a philosopher expresses his opinion of the poets, even to-day, there is apt to be a shrinking of sensitive souls. The poetic instinct and the critical faculty are more likely to 'mix' than to mingle when they meet. Doubly difficult must it be when the philosopher is a poet also; yet in this case his animadversions will be aimed rather against the content than the spirit of poetry that excites his protest. At the same time there exists a certain kinship between poetry and philosophy: one shapes an ideal world, the other insists that we try to live in it.

Professor Brownson has initiated an inquiry into Plato's studies of the poets and his condemnation of them, his final criticism of poetry and his estimate of the function of poetry in the

society of his ideal state. He banishes the epic poets, notably Homer, from his "state beyond", but he is not able so easily to dispose of all the poets. In poetry men's ideas crystallize sooner than in philosophy; thus the poets looking back with misty memories upon a past that fancy renders dear and paints with brighter colors than reality justifies naturally rouse a certain impatience in the philosopher, who would like to base his criticism of life upon possibilities at least, if facts seem to be too shifting and uncertain. The superstitions and opinions of the *hoi polloi*, however, have crystallized at a still earlier stage, and so the poet still and always has his message and teaching for the masses, often coming nearer to them than the philosophers. The philosopher too often requires translation into the vernacular, and much of his teaching might remain impotent or unknown if the poet did not go to the philosopher for his forms of thought. Plato is justified in not excluding the dramatists in his general condemnation. Thought works its way from philosophy to the life of the people through poetry. Epic has long been supplanted by romance and the novel; but the dramatists have lost none of their power, as will soon appear to anyone who sets out to trace any now generally accepted opinion to its origins. But even Plato was impatient and so much of superstition had attached itself to poetry, to epic especially, that he felt obliged to discard the whole thing in many instances. The "Enlightenment" had done its work. The old conceptions of the gods were harmful in the instruction of youth.

The book is exhaustive, its conclusions are valuable if not startling, and the style is attractive. Of especial service to students of Plato will be found the tables of references by Plato to the poet. Useful, too, is the insight given into Plato's own criticism of poetry as such.

J. B. EDWARDS.

COLLECTED POEMS. By Edwin Arlington Robinson. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1921. Pp. 591.

Whatever may be said of other contemporary American poets, it can never be said of Edwin Arlington Robinson that his reputation was a mushroom growth. The poet is fifty-three years